



News Release

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Vita Nonwovens Announces New Indiana Production Facility ***Project Means \$6 Million Investment in Fort Wayne***

(Fort Wayne, IN) – Increasing market share and the continued success of a wide range of products has lead to the investment by Vita Nonwovens, USA in a new Indiana production facility. Total investment at the new plant amounts to over \$6 million US (£3.7 million). Vita Nonwovens plans to occupy an existing facility at 9403 Avionics Drive near Fort Wayne International Airport.

The announcement was made today by Filiep Libeert, Main Board Director of British Vita PLC and Chairman of Vita Nonwovens. Libeert was in Fort Wayne recently finalizing plans to begin operations here. “We explored possible locations in Indiana, Ohio and Michigan, and quickly realized the right place to grow our business was in Fort Wayne,” said Libeert. “Over the course of 2003 we will equip and configure our new facility so that production can begin by the end of the year.”

The state-of-the-art plant in Fort Wayne will be managed from the United States headquarters of Vita Nonwovens in High Point, North Carolina, and supported by a local leadership team. Vita Nonwovens has begun the process of hiring individuals to manage and operate the Fort Wayne facility. The site will manufacture technical and specialty nonwovens for air filtration, automotive, industrial, furniture and bedding markets.

“This is another great win for Indiana and for Allen County,” said Lt. Governor Joe Kernan, who leads the state’s economic development efforts as director of the Indiana Department of Commerce. “Vita Nonwovens brings a significant new investment to the area and creates good jobs for local residents. We, at Commerce, are proud to have partnered with the City of Fort Wayne and the Alliance to bring this project to northeastern Indiana.”

This announcement signals the latest in a series of investments made by British Vita in its nonwoven business in the United States. In 2001, Vita Nonwovens invested \$4 million in a new production line at the High Point facility, and in late 2002 a new \$5 million plant in Schertz, Texas began operations.

“We are proud that Vita Nonwovens’ latest investment, and first venture into the Midwestern United States, is occurring here in our community,” stated Fort Wayne Mayor Graham Richard. “We offer Vita Nonwovens the right business climate, an outstanding workforce and the geographic positioning necessary to be successful. This is a good fit for all concerned and we’re excited to welcome Vita Nonwovens to Fort Wayne.”

The Fort Wayne-Allen County Economic Development Alliance worked with the Indiana Department of Commerce, the City of Fort Wayne’s Department of Economic Development, Goldstine-Knapke Company, Hagerman Construction, AEP and NIPSCO to secure this investment. City and state officials have offered the company worker training funds, and Vita Nonwovens is also seeking a tax abatement from the City of Fort Wayne on the planned equipment purchase.

Individuals interested in applying for positions with Vita Nonwovens may submit a resume at the offices of the Indiana Department of Workforce Development (DWD) and JobWorks. The joint DWD/JobWorks office is located at 201 East Rudisill Boulevard. Interested individuals can also e-mail resumes to rbennettsheirbon@jobworksinc.org.

Note to editors:

Based in High Point, North Carolina, Vita Nonwovens joined Vita as part of the acquisition of the Olympic Products Division of Cone Mills Corporation in 1996. Its roots were in the supply of nonwovens to the furniture and bedding industries, which supported the core foam business. Since joining with Vita's other Nonwovens businesses in 1998, the company has diversified into new markets. While retaining its furniture and bedding business, it has grown through sales to a range of end markets including automotive, filtration and industrial markets.

Vita Nonwovens operates from key manufacturing sites in the US and Europe. It forms one of three main Divisions of British Vita PLC (www.britishvita.com), a world leader in polymer processing with products that encompass foam and plastics as well as nonwovens.

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